

Problems and difficulties of classifying religions on the basis of confessional differences

Vasileva E.

Kazan Federal University, 420008, Kremlevskaya 18, Kazan, Russia

Abstract

© 2014, Ecozone, OAIMDD. All rights reserved. The aim of the present article is to examine the most vital problems of classifying religions on the basis of confessional differences and thus to inspire scholars to create a completely different classification compared to the one already existing. In the article the following four problems of religions' classification are discussed. 1) The problem of preserving the principle of unity of the division basis in the classification for more than five thousand religions. The solution to this problem is to build a taxonomy, i.e. a combination of independent hierarchical classifications connected to each other only on the layer of the highest ('root') taxon. 2) The problem of religions' dynamism which it is offered to be solved by completing static classifications with schemes of religions' genesis. 3) The question of the ontological status of the lowest rank taxa. As the lowest taxonomic category it is suggested to choose the 'form'. Its corresponding taxa of the lowest layers are conventional units (such as, for instance, Adventism in Protestantism) constructed on the basis of least similarity according to confessional characters. 4) The problem of religion definition is regarded to be false. As classification is simply a tool, its basis can be any operational definition of religion. Consequently, there can be built many different classifications and taxonomies of religions.

Keywords

Classifications, Classiology, Religion, Study, Taxonomy